



October 21, 2010

The Honorable Frederick Kessler
State Capitol, Room 302 North
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, Wisconsin 53708

Dear Representative Kessler:

I am writing to you regarding the Legislative Council Special Study Committee on Health Care Access. It is my understanding that this Committee "is directed to study potential solutions to the shortage of health care providers, particularly in rural areas and inner cities, and the adequacy of funding for public health. The Special Committee is directed to study possible state assistance to underserved areas and an expansion of Wisconsin's capacity for training family practice physicians and nurses, and additional funding sources for public health."

According to your October 19th press release regarding the upcoming public hearing here in Milwaukee, you are quoted as saying, "We are finding inner city areas becoming health care access 'deserts.' It is important that we find a way for those living in the inner city to have access to adequate health care services, including mental health services and dentists. Funding for public health initiatives is also crucial to ensuring access for all."

I was pleased to see that dentistry now appears to be included in the scope of the Committee's work. As Wisconsin's only dental school since 1894, Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSOD) has a responsibility and longstanding commitment to educate the state's future dentists and promote oral health statewide. As the Dean of MUSOD, I think it would be in the best interest of the Committee to come tour the Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSOD) at a future meeting in order to gain a better understanding of MUSOD's oral health care outreach both within urban and rural areas of Wisconsin to educate and train the future dental workforce.

In 2008-2009, the Marquette University School of Dentistry dental clinics served nearly 25,000 total patients in 64 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, with approximately 91,000 patient visits during that year. The main clinic at MUSOD serves patients from 52 of Wisconsin's 72 counties. MUSOD is one of the state's largest dental Medicaid providers, annually serving nearly 5,000

Medicaid patients through the Milwaukee clinics alone. In fact, the total number of low-income patients is much greater, given that the MUSOD-affiliated clinics serve high numbers of Medicaid patients. Specifically, the Ministry Dental Center in Stevens Point serves only Medicaid patients; the clinic at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire serves patients below 200 percent of the FPL; and the majority of patients served at the Tri-County Community Dental Clinic in Appleton are on Medicaid.

Consequently, MUSOD is one of the state's largest dental Medicaid providers. MUSOD is often the "provider of last resort" for many individuals throughout Wisconsin.

At present, MUSOD provides services in six clinics throughout the state. Three are managed and operated entirely by MUSOD and include the Main Clinic on campus within MUSOD's current facility and two urban outreach clinics in Milwaukee: Marquette University Community Dental Clinic-North (on West Capitol Drive and North 2nd Street) and Marquette University Community Dental Clinic- South (on Oklahoma Avenue and South 20th Street).

The remaining three clinics are affiliated with MUSOD and located in rural/underserved areas. MUSOD serves as an on-site partner at these facilities, which are operated by another entity. These three sites, as referred to above, include the Tri-County Community Dental Clinic in Appleton, Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, and the Ministry Dental Center in Stevens Point.

MUSOD has taken a proactive role in creating opportunities for future practitioners to settle in more rural and underserved areas throughout Wisconsin by developing several programs to address the needs in these communities. While graduates of Marquette University's School of Dentistry are located in 69 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, a recent Wisconsin Dental Association workforce study revealed that almost half of all dentists are located in the four largest counties—Brown, Dane, Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

Consistent with MUSOD's mission to provide clinic experiences outside the walls of the dental school and to proactively help address the distribution issue in more rural areas of the state, Delta Dental of Wisconsin began supporting the Delta Dental of Wisconsin Rural Oral Health Fellowship Program at MUSOD in the 2007-08 academic year. The Rural Health Fellows participate in a one-year post-graduate training program and have a D.D.S. degree and are licensed to practice within the State of Wisconsin. Fellows receive a one-year experience designed to augment their clinical skills and bring confidence levels to a point where they feel comfortable serving as a solo practitioner in a small community, perhaps independent of other oral health care providers. The Delta Fellows currently treat patients one of the MUSOD-affiliated clinics (Appleton, Eau Claire and Stevens Point). There have been six Delta Dental

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Fellows to date. 83% continue to practice in Wisconsin's underserved communities and one treats underserved residents in Colorado.

Also through the support of Delta Dental of Wisconsin, MUSOD recently hired a Practice Placement Coordinator who seeks to match graduating students with practice opportunities or dental service needs in underserved and/or rural areas of Wisconsin. The practice placement coordinator is responsible for establishing and coordinating a range of programs resulting in direct contact and outreach in rural areas and communities within Wisconsin that may be interested in attracting a dentist. The placement coordinator will be instrumental in helping to address the uneven distribution of the state's dental workforce.

If the Committee does have a dentistry focus as part of health care access I would be interested in serving as a member of the Committee. I would also be happy to discuss MUSOD's future plans regarding dental education and creating additional access to quality oral health care for Wisconsin's citizens.

I believe visiting the School of Dentistry would provide Committee members a more thorough understanding of MUSOD's role in providing an exceptional dental education and delivering the best prepared, clinically competent dentists capable of providing effective oral health care in a variety of practice settings, consistent with the school's dual mission of dental education and service.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding such a visit and can be reached at (414) 288-7485. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William K. Lobb".

William K. Lobb, D.D.S., M.S., M.P.H.

cc: Mr. Terry Anderson, Director, Wisconsin Legislative Council
The Honorable Luther Olsen, Vice-Chair, Legislative Special Committee on Health Care Access